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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: OAS INDIGENOUS RIGHTS
DECLARATION

REF: SECSTATE 145292

¶1. On November 1, Emboff met with Miriam Siles, an official at the multilateral relations section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The official in charge of indigenous issues within the international organizations section, Jimena Nacif, is currently away on business travel. Siles was aware of Ambassador Cuadros' suggestion of a plan of action and said that the Bolivian government plans to continue to press for a "practical" step in the OAS. Siles did not comment on whether negotiations for a declaration could be put on hold, but she did say that "more than just words" are needed. She reiterated that Ambassador Cuadros still supports his own suggestion.

¶2. On the question of practical support and contributions for the year of action, Siles agreed that this is an area where all countries could contribute. Siles mentioned that Bolivia has substantial experience with indigenous rights and seemed amenable to the idea of Bolivia contributing speakers and ideas, but she provided no comment on the idea of financial support.

¶3. Comment: It is important to note that recently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not always been completely in the loop on official decisions, which sometimes come from above with little MFA input. The final decision on this issue will likely be taken by President Morales or his close advisors, and it is unclear how much that decision will resemble the current thinking of the MFA. Although at the working levels of the MFA there seems to be at least conceptual support for a year of action, we understand that Venezuela and Nicaragua may be pressuring Bolivia to focus on a declaration and that therefore Ambassador Cuadros may be backing away from his own idea. Given President Morales' ties to Venezuela, it is likely that he will follow Venezuela's lead, despite the fact that the idea of a plan of action originated with his own Ambassador to the OAS. End comment.

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